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ABSTRACT

A survey was done to identify model programs and approaches in vocational education at the middle school and secondary school levels that target at-risk Hispanic American females. That survey polled state education vocational education directors and vocational sex equity coordinators in 27 states and the District of Columbia. The study sought to identify program components and practices associated with improved academic and employment outcomes for these students and to generate discussion within the sex equity and vocational education communities. The programs that focused on serving this special population tended to do the following: (1) systematically address the barriers that at-risk Hispanic American females face to greater and more diverse participation in vocational education; (2) use Hispanic American role models and businesses; (3) collaborate with community-based organizations; (4) examine the role of Hispanic culture, specifically the influence of home and family, male and female relations, and level of group acculturation; and (5) use approaches impacting the course-taking behaviors of females and the acquisition of technical, basic, and English language skills. A section is included which describes eight programs that target at-risk Hispanic American female students. The document also includes an appendix listing programs serving but not targeting Hispanic American females, and an appendix describing selected programs from the first appendix. Included are one table and 18 references. (JB)

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STRATEGIES . . .

FOR INCREASING THE ACHIEVEMENT AND ATTAINMENT OF AT-RISK HISPANIC FEMALES THROUGH VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

ED340792

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Strategies for Increasing the Achievement and Attainment of At-Risk Hispanic Females Through Vocational Education

by
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August 1988

CONTENTS

PAGE

Acknowledgements i

Foreward ii

I. Overview

- Facts on At-Risk Hispanic Females.....1
- Vocational Education and At-Risk Youth.....3

II. Research Strategy.....5

- Limitations and Foreseen Pitfalls.....7

III. Methods.....8

IV. Results.....9

V. Programs Targeting At-Risk Hispanic Females.....11

- Mi Carrera.....11
- Hispanic Women on the Move.....13
- Project CAST.....14
- Hi-Tech Institute for Girls.....15
- HOY! Hispanics Organizing for Youth.....16
- Ethnicity and Sex Role Stereotyping.....18
- Enrichment for Latinas Leading to Advancement (ELLA).....19
- The California Approach.....20

VI. Discussion.....22

VII. Recommendations.....24

References

Appendix

A. List of Identified Programs Serving but not Specifically Targeting Hispanic Females

B. Description of Selected Programs from the Preceding List

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The researcher is indebted to many individuals and organizations for their support in the development of this document.

The Hispanic Policy Development Project with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York provided the funds and impetus for this effort through its "Competition to Reduce Dropout Rates and Raise Achievement Levels of At-Risk Hispanic Students." The goals of the competition--to identify and promote strategies and policies that help at-risk students stay in school and improve their academic performance--closely paralleled the focus of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) on assuring success for students at-risk of school failure. The long-term involvement of the CCSSO Resource Center on Educational Equity in issues of gender equity in education programs prompted the decision to focus on at-risk Hispanic females. Resource Center staff, Cynthia G. Brown and Julia Lara, provided much insight and support to the researcher. Thanks also go to Michelle Nunn who typed numerous drafts of this report.

The goals of this project, however, could not have been realized without collaboration with the National Leadership Development Conference (NLDC), the organization of state vocational sex equity coordinators, and specifically the NLDC co-directors, Marie Mayor of Maryland and Barbara A. Bitters of Wisconsin. The NLDC graciously provided access to its members and a forum for exploring the issues discussed in this paper.

Among others who provided support for this effort were the members of the project advisory committee who functioned as a sounding board throughout the project: Gloria Baragas, Diana Martinez-Boyd, Elena Orrego, Maria Torres, and Maria Tukeva.

Finally, the researcher is indebted to survey respondents and project directors who took time to discuss their projects with the researcher and relay their particular strategies for improving the educational and vocational outcomes for at-risk Hispanic females.

FOREWARD

About one-fourth of Hispanic households are headed by women and more than half of these families have incomes below the U.S. poverty level. Improved educational attainment and occupational training represent the keys to economic improvement and self-sufficiency for many Hispanic females and their families. Yet with a dropout rate of 18.6 percent, Hispanic females are more likely to leave school than white or black females or white males. Moreover, in urban areas, young Hispanic male dropouts are more likely to return and complete high school than their female counterparts. Linguistic and cultural differences, poverty, and poor basic skills create a special set of circumstances confronting many Hispanic females which put them at great risk of dropping out of school and jeopardizing their economic futures.

Participation in vocational education which goes beyond marginal involvement at the exploratory level has been shown to have a positive correlation with school retention. If vocational education is to be a realistic quality option among many options in the education and retention of high risk Hispanic females, changes will be required in its presentation and the role it currently plays in the education and training of this group of females. Efforts must be made to specifically target the needs of these students and develop aggressive approaches designed to guarantee the potential rewards that quality vocational experiences mean to immediate and long-term employment and earning potential. Passive efforts or those developed for other female populations may not be appropriate to the cultural and sexual norms influencing career choice and job preparation that make a career a reality for Hispanic females.

The Council of Chief State School Officers Resource Center on Educational Equity conducted a survey of state education vocational education directors and vocational sex equity coordinators in 27 states and the District of Columbia to identify model programs and approaches in vocational education at the middle and secondary school levels which target the special needs of at-risk Hispanic females. The goal was to identify program components and practices associated with improved academic and employment outcomes for these students and to generate discussion within the sex equity and vocational education communities about the best ways of meeting the equity goals of this population of females.

Respondents identified a range of programs. The more focused programs tended to have in common sets of components which seldomly appeared in tandem in the more general programs. In a comprehensive manner, the former programs systematically addressed the many barriers that at-risk Hispanic females face to greater and more diverse participation in vocational education. They tended to use

Hispanic role models and businesses and were generally designed, implemented, and/or run in collaboration with community-based organizations. The role of Hispanic culture, specifically the influence of home and family, male and female relations and level of group acculturation were often key elements. More traditional approaches impacting the course-taking behaviors of females and the acquisition of technical, basic, and English language skills were also utilized.

It is hoped that the information on programs targeting at-risk Hispanic females is useful to state education agencies in structuring or funding programs, providing technical assistance to local districts, developing resources and materials, and planning strategies to increase the participation of minority females in non-traditional vocational education programs.

I. OVERVIEW

FACTS ON AT RISK HISPANIC FEMALES

As a group, Hispanic women are diverse, young, and many are economically at risk:

- In 1985, Hispanic birth and fertility rates were 50 percent higher than for the non-Hispanic population (Ventura, 1985).
- For 1986, about half (49 percent) of all Hispanic women were in the labor force compared to larger proportions of white (54 percent) and black (57 percent) women. The labor force participation level for Hispanic women with children under age 18 was also 49 percent; however, similar white and black women showed much higher participation rates (70 percent and 73 percent, respectively) (News, August 20, 1986).
- Compared to other females and males, Hispanic females earn the lowest weekly median wages of all full-time workers (News, October 1986).
- Although Hispanic women have lower median years of school completed (11.4 years) than all women in the U.S. (12.6 years), the gap is closing due to higher attainment levels among young women (U. S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, 1985).

Improved educational attainment and occupational training represent the keys to economic improvement and self-sufficiency for many Hispanic females and their families. Conversely, the costs of dropping out of school for them are extremely high.

- The Hispanic Policy Development Institute (1986) found that two years after their scheduled graduation, non-graduate Hispanic females, married or not, were four times more likely to have children and ten times more likely to be on welfare than similar graduate females. Non-graduates were also less likely to be employed or enrolled in vocational and training programs than graduates.
- With a dropout rate of 18.6 percent (the attrition rate between spring of the sophomore year and spring of the senior year), Hispanic females are more likely to leave school than white or black females (11.5 percent and 13.8 percent, respectively) or white males (13.0 percent) (Center for

Education Statistics, May 1987). Also, in urban areas, young Hispanic male dropouts are more likely to return and complete high school than their female counterparts (Earle, Roach, and Fisher, 1987).

- Indicators of school failure such as poor basic skills have also been linked to early pregnancy and parenting which go hand in hand with dropping out and limited life options. Also, English language proficiency is related to high school completion. Hispanics with a non-English background are about three times as likely to become dropouts as Hispanics with English-only backgrounds (Orum, July 1985).

The role that culture plays in the determination of sex roles affecting the attainment of educational and occupational goals is key to the success of interventions to increase these outcomes for Hispanic females.

- Many young Hispanic females experience intergenerational conflicts because they bridge the more traditional values of their home and parents and the more permissive cultural values of the dominant North American society (Soto, 1986). Cultural values also affect factors such as the decision of a parenting teenager to return to school. Hispanic girls are more likely to be primary caregivers for their infants, to anticipate living with the infant's father, and to reduce their peer contacts, and hence less likely to return to school than black teenagers (Chodos, 1986).

Linguistic and cultural differences coupled with poverty create a special set of circumstances confronting many Hispanic females which place them at risk of dropping out of school or limiting their vocational options. Challenging and breaking many traditional restraints imposed on females while systematically working toward an educational and occupational goal is necessary for all females faced with the realities of a larger share of the economic burden for families and greater opportunities in the workplace. For many at-risk Hispanic females, realizing this goal becomes a special challenge.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND AT-RISK YOUTH

For many at-risk youth, participation in vocational education can not only expand options for employment and self-sufficiency but represents the only opportunity to access the skilled and technical employment fields.

- Participation in the mainstream vocational education curriculum, i.e. in occupational (job skill training) courses, is characteristic of school completers. In contrast, participation in exploratory, consumer/homemaker, or industrial arts courses or in work-study experiences not directly related to the overall high school program is characteristic of school dropouts (Weber, 1986).

- It is generally conceded that minority and disadvantaged students have had no problem gaining access to vocational education. What has been a problem is gaining access to quality programs--that is, challenging programs which offer training for jobs that are available, worthy of having (on the basis of status, compensation, and likelihood of leading to a career), probably unattainable without the training, or that prepare students for postsecondary training (NAVE, 1988).

- Equity approaches in vocational education (primarily reflecting provisions in the Carl D. Perkins Federal Vocational Education Act) have focused on programs, services, and activities designed to provide greater self-sufficiency for females and their families. Strategies have included: training for and placement in nontraditionally female (i.e., high wage) occupations and encouragement to obtain marketable skills; provision of support services (e.g., dependent care and transportation); and cooperative education and other work training experiences. For limited English proficient populations, bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) vocational education services have also been provided to ensure access and improve their chances of success.

- For Hispanics, who tend to drop out of school earlier than other groups of students (Orum, 1985), the importance of early career education, guidance, and acquisition of basic skill competencies is essential. Meaningful involvement in a vocational education program can be an important element in establishing bonds with the school which can retain these students until graduation.

For Hispanic females, school retention and preparation for an array of postsecondary and life options may be further hampered by gender and cultural stereotyping.

- A recent survey of Hispanic high school students found that girls indicated a narrower range of career options than boys, principally confining themselves to traditional female careers such as nurse, teacher, and secretary. The study also found that 52 percent of girls as opposed to 37 percent of boys seemed to think that a women has to make a choice between family, home, and a job (The Network, Inc., 1985).
- Differences in parental expectations also play a role in the occupational attainment and aspirations of males and females. A study found that 75 percent of Mexican-origin parents have high status occupation expectations for their sons but only 53 percent have similar expectations for their daughters (Solorzano, 1986).

II. RESEARCH STRATEGY

Existing programs which reflect a sensitivity to the specific needs of at-risk Hispanic females illustrate a range of promising practices which can be shared among state and local vocational education and sex equity personnel and administrators of programs serving this population. With a grant from the Hispanic Policy Development Project, the Resource Center on Educational Equity of the Council of Chief State School Officers sought to identify programs and approaches in vocational education at the middle and secondary school levels which may encourage school completion and achievement among Hispanic females at risk of school failure.

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1) What are the specific components and characteristics associated with programs serving at-risk Hispanic females?

2) Do these components/characteristics lead to improved achievement and attainment among these students?

The research however raised another set of questions for policymakers and program developers, i.e.,

1. Which is better for realizing the equity goals for at-risk Hispanic females--targeted or more generally focused programs?

2. What type of agency can best provide for or develop targeted programs? Is this a role for state education agencies (SEAs), local education agencies (LEAs), or community-based organizations?

3. How can participation in vocational education be more closely related to school achievement and attainment for at-risk Hispanic females?

4. Do set-aside programs under the Carl D. Perkins Federal Vocational Education Act tend to overly compartmentalize the services required of at-risk Hispanic females? What is needed to provide more comprehensively structured programs?

LIMITATIONS AND FORESEEN PITFALLS

It was initially realized that a certain amount of confusion would result from any attempt to identify vocational programs specifically targeting or principally enrolling at-risk Hispanic females and which were related to the outcomes described. Problematic concerns related to terms and concepts such as "at risk", "targeted programs", and "attainment" and "achievement".

As a population, at-risk Hispanic females are subsumed within many special populations targeted for federal vocational program assistance such as economically and academically disadvantaged persons, the limited English proficient, single parents and homemakers, and persons participating in programs designed to eliminate sex bias and stereotyping in vocational education. Hence, at-risk Hispanic females are enrolled in programs with other ethnic and racial groups and with females sharing at-risk designations such as pregnancy and early parenting or academic deficiencies. They are also enrolled with males in programs for the limited English proficient and with other females in sex equity vocational programs. Unless Hispanic females predominate in these programs it is unlikely the program would have any uniquely identifying characteristics associated with this sub-constituency.

Also academic achievement and attainment (i.e., high school graduation, high wage employment, and other postsecondary training experiences) have not been well documented outcomes of vocational education programs.

III. METHODS

In spite of these limitations a survey instrument was developed, and, to avoid canvassing states with small Hispanic populations, administered only in states with sizeable Hispanic populations.

The survey instrument was administered to state directors of vocational education in 27 states (with Hispanic populations greater than 50,000 as per the 1980 Census) and the District of Columbia. The information requested was very basic and included the name of the identified program, a contact person, the source of funding, and the broad goals of the program. Follow-up phone interviews with contact persons in the identified programs provided more in-depth information on the programs, program components, and specific strategies used.

IV. RESULTS

Responses were received from 21 states and the District of Columbia identifying a wide range of programs and strategies. Among the responding states seven could not identify vocational programs specifically targeting at-risk Hispanic females. Among this group one state with a high concentration of Hispanics indicated that services to Hispanic females were being adequately addressed through current coeducation vocational education programs and other services for at-risk youth. One state indicated a focus on migrant Hispanic students of both genders. Another state indicated such programs existed at the postsecondary but not at the secondary level.

The remaining responding states identified programs which fell within the following general categories.

1. Programs targeting at-risk females but few Hispanics (2)
2. Programs targeting at-risk males and females (4)
3. Programs targeting minority females (2)
4. Programs targeting pregnant and parenting youth (4)
5. Programs targeting limited English proficient students (10)
6. Programs targeting adults (2)
7. Programs targeting at-risk Hispanic females (8)

(A list of identified programs from the first six categories is provided in Appendix A.)

Although the needs of at-risk Hispanic females are addressed to some extent in the programs of categories 1 through 6 above, these programs are not specifically designed for nor do they describe

themselves as being targeted at this group. Nevertheless, these more generally focused programs provide valuable information about the type of services available to at-risk Hispanic females in the states and are a good source of comparison and contrast to the more population-specific programs. On analysis, however, they are found to possess many elements also found in programs which specifically target at-risk Hispanic females.

Table 1 summarizes and illustrates components from some of the more generally designed programs to the more specifically focused ones. As indicated by the solid lines in the table, these components are consistently present in the targeted programs but occasionally present (see broken lines) or are absent (blank spaces) from the general programs.

Section V provides a description of the eight programs and approaches identified by SEA personnel which specifically target at-risk Hispanic females. A brief description of several of the less targeted programs is provided in Appendix B.

Table 1
CONTINUUM OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS

PROGRAM COMPONENTS	General At-Risk Students	Minority Females	Pregnant/ Parenting Students	Limited English Proficient	At-Risk Hispanic Females
Counseling	———	———	———	———	———
Remediation	———	———	———	———	———
Career Exploration	———	———	- - - - -	- - - - -	———
Enrichment		———			
Low Student/ Staff Ratio	———	———	———	———	———
Community-Based Organization Involvement	- - - - -	———	- - - - -	- - - - -	———
Work Experience/ Exposure	———	———	———		———
Employment Skills Dev'd	———		———	- - - - -	———
Parental Involvement	- - - - -	———	- - - - -	- - - - -	———
Child Care			———		
Spanish Language Materials & Personnel				———	
Supplemental Guidance to Schools				———	
Outreach for Voc Ed Programs				———	
Role of Culture		———			———
Hispanic/ Employer Role Models		———			———

Solid line represents presence of identified component; broken line represents occasional presence of component; blank spaces represent component not present.

V. PROGRAMS TARGETING AT-RISK HISPANIC FEMALES

Mi Carrera (My Career)

Mi Carrera is an educational and employment program for minority young women which is part of the Mi Casa Women's Center, a community-based organization. Located in the west side of Denver, Mi Casa has close ties to the community and the local schools. The Center first began serving junior and senior high school girls when the success of working with their mothers through the Center's Displaced Homemakers Program became known throughout the community. In order to address the alarmingly high dropout rate among Hispanic girls from Denver's District 1, the Mi Carrera program was originated.

During the school year, Mi Carrera offers a special program called OBRERA, which means woman worker in Spanish. OBRERA enrolls young women in non-traditional courses such as construction, media, and computers at the Career Education Center.

In addition to these courses, young women may become involved with the Mi Carrera Summer Employment Program. Each summer, Mi Carrera offers its participants the opportunity to be trained in non-traditional jobs and work for ten weeks. In the past, Mi Carrera youth have worked as carpenters, landscapers, printers, drafters, media graphic illustrators, and computer technicians.

In preparation for these jobs, the young women participate in ninety (90) hours of training which includes topics such as: Growing Up Female; Becoming Assertive; Understanding Cultural Values; Exploring Careers; and Breaking Barriers to Non-traditional Jobs.

Mi Carrera also coordinates conferences held at the local school. Mi Carrera activities are in great demand within the community. Although only at-risk girls are targeted for the programs, participants tend to evidence higher graduation rates than the District as a whole (85 percent compared to about 50 percent for Hispanics district-wide).

Among the important elements accounting for the success of Mi Carrera are:

- a low participant to staff ratio;
- staff with proficiency in Spanish who are able to culturally connect with participants;
- the availability of programs relevant to the needs of girls in the community; and
- family trust and support and the Center's recognition of the role of the extended family in Hispanic culture. (Because many of the mothers have participated in Mi Casa programs, they support the Center and are interested in their daughters' school retention and preparation for lucrative careers.)

According to the director, the more comprehensive program, the better a plan can be structured for insuring retention, achievement, and expanded life options for participants. Among the drawbacks of working with a largely Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) female population (age 15 and above) is that their minds are more firmly set on traditionally female occupations than younger girls who are more flexible and receptive to a wider range of careers. Policies governing youth training and employment programs should allow for efforts to address younger age groups.

Mi Carrera is supported with funds from a variety of federal (Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Equity and Guidance funds and U. S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau), state, and local sources.

Contact: Cecilia Ortiz, Director
Mi Casa Resource Center
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Denver, CO 80204
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Hispanic Women on the Move

This project is sponsored by the Essex County Vocational-Technical Schools/Career Center in New Jersey and implemented by ASPIRA, Inc, of New Jersey. Its goal is to increase the participation of Hispanic females in non-traditional careers throught increased enrollment in programs leading to these careers at the local vocational technical center. The program targets young females in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.

Project activities include a conference for 200 young females, workshops and follow-up activities including site visits to a variety of job sites and to the vocational-technical center. The students are exposed to Hispanic tradeswomen and role models in non-traditional careers. Additionally, the project supports the efforts of counselors in the middle schools by providing career literature and audio-visual resources in Spanish.

The program success is being measured by the number of females who apply to and ultimately attend the vocational-technical center in an expanded range of career fields--not just the traditionally female areas.

Unique aspects of the program contributing to its success are the use of Hispanic personnel known to the community and knowlegeable of the cultural issues related to the vocational choices of Hispanic females. This provides a bond with the participants and access to appropriate role models and resources in the Hispanic community.

The project, however, in highlighting participation in courses leading to non-traditional careers, has drawn attention to the near absence of Hispanic female participation in these courses at the vocational-technical center. In fact ESL support services tend to be located in the traditionally female courses and programs and are noticeably absent from less traditional areas such as graphics, printing, and carpentry.

The program is supported by federal Carl D. Perkins Vocational Educational funds.

Contact: Caridad di Pavla
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East Orange, NJ 07017
(201) 622-1100

Project CAST (Coordinated Assistance, Services, and Training) for Hispanic Women

This project is implemented through the Middlesex County (NJ) Vocational Technical Schools with federal vocational funds. It is designed to identify, counsel, and provide vocational and support services for female single parents and homemakers. The program at the Perth Amboy campus reflects the needs of the immediate burgeoning Hispanic community and is designed to increase Hispanic involvement in vocational training and support services for the purpose of placing young out-of-school females (ages 14 and above) in high wage employment.

Assessments, basic skills, and support services needs are provided and a flexible program is developed for the student's needs. Participants attend for half or full-day, for short-term or longer periods, or for remediation or GED preparation. Although they can select from 64 different training programs available throughout the county, the programs offered at the Perth Amboy site are exclusively non-traditionally female (i.e., auto mechanics, carpentry and cabinet making, electrical trades, electronics, machine shop, painting and decorating, sheet metal, technical drafting, and welding).

The site coordinator, an experienced teacher fluent in Spanish and knowledgeable of Hispanic culture, works energetically to make the school accessible to these women. She does outreach with local churches and community leaders, and works closely with school staff. Along with a supportive school administrator and other program staff, a warm and nurturing environment has been established.

The program has been effective in meeting its immediate goals of equipping participants with marketable skills and placing them in high wage jobs or training for high wage jobs. It has also helped to desegregate the overwhelmingly male student body of the school and establish the vocational school as a viable option available to community youth.

Contact: Dr. Karen McCloud-Hjazeh, Principal
Middlesex County Vocational and Technical School
256 Easton Ave.
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
(201) 247-3832

OR

Ms. Sandra Gonzales
The Women's Job Center
Middlesex County Vocational and Technical School
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Perth Amboy, NJ 08861
(201) 442-9595

Hi-Tech Institute for Girls

High-Tech Institute is an exemplary vocational exploration project for young Hispanic women funded through the Arizona Department of Education to the Division of Student Services at Northern Arizona University (NAU). The aim is to expand career options of young women by increasing motivation, interest, and educational achievement of 7th through 10th grade girls toward non-traditional technologically-based careers.

Enrollment in more technical-vocational education and related subjects such as math and science is encouraged. Specifically, the program is intended to alter sex-role attitudes of the target group. Through the use of models and mentors, societal and self-imposed limitations that have historically restricted participation of women in technical courses of study are addressed and modified.

An out-of-school program is conducted in collaboration with Friendly House, a Phoenix-based Hispanic community organization. Over a three-week period, a series of workshops are conducted on Friday evenings and Saturdays for twenty-six (26) girls and their mothers. Friendly House identifies the teen participants, provides transportation, and solicits business/industry to fund meals for the students. NAU provides all educational and social activities. Alternative learning strategies and incentives are used as a means of ensuring continued participation of the teens, which is voluntary.

The curriculum is comprised of the following: (1) computer awareness, taught as a means of learning and applying technology; (2) electronics assembly (instructions, blueprint reading, color coding, soldering and assembly are required learning); (3) tours to businesses or agencies, such as Salt River Project; (4) career awareness; (5) personal development, such as self-esteem and assertiveness training; (6) presentations by Hispanic role models with technical backgrounds; and (7) Family Math, conducted in conjunction with the Hispanic teen and a parent or family member.

This project targets the adolescent female. By delaying intervention, girls may simply opt out of a career in technology due to an inadequate learning base for such studies.

The program receives federal vocational education funds.

Contact: Beth Packard, Project Director

OR

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HOY! ("Today"), Hispanics Organizing for Youth!
A Model Minority Mentoring Project

HOY! is a pilot program at Northern Arizona University which targets moderate-achievement Mexican American junior high girls and their mothers. The mother/daughter mentoring program is funded through the Arizona Department of Education, Vocational Education Division. A unique feature provides a minimum of two years of follow-up and support services, such as study skills and tutorial assistance. In this manner, changes in attitudes about self and career aspirations, as well as educational persistence patterns, can be monitored.

The program builds upon the natural family bond between mother and daughter as a means of increasing educational persistence and participation. One quarter of the population is at-risk of school failure; the other girls are potential at-risk graduates--without goals and course selection patterns leading to postsecondary education or training.

The goal is to develop a multicultural individual capable of succeeding in professional/business and education systems. Specifically, the program is intended to alter attitudes of the teens and their parents. Study of Hispanic familial culture, defined as a set of experiences unique to a given family unit, are used as a means of self-affirmation and self-appreciation. Later these family relationships are explored in terms of the contributing and inhibiting factors related to educational achievement and college participation by developing a level of comfort in acculturation between the Mexican and dominant cultures.

To build the prerequisite skills and knowledge necessary for graduation and to meet new college entrance requirements, this program targets the adolescent female. Early intervention ensures Hispanic girls adequate educational preparation for careers and higher educational opportunities.

As the name implies, this program will also serve the Hispanic mother or the individual serving in the mother role, e.g., aunt or grandmother. These adults are provided the resources to develop their own special goals and aspirations. This network is a means of communication and support among the adults. Finally, effort is made to create a total family environment that promotes educational achievement.

The program operates for one full semester in the spring. Approximately eleven (11) sessions, two and one-half hours (2 1/2) each occur over a period of four months. The first part of the evening is set aside for concurrent sessions for the daughters and those in the mother role. Evenings conclude by bringing mothers and daughters together for communication and career development activities.

Saturday laboratory experiences include Family Math, computers, writing, and radio assembly. All of the career exploration experiences culminate in mentor/mentee relationships with career professionals.

The program is implemented in six stages: (1) culture and self-esteem; (2) decisions and options; (3) career exploration, to include assessments of career interests, talents, and preferences; (4) goal planning/plan of action; (5) mentoring/job shadowing with Hispanic career role models; and (6) creating networks, a support group for mutual communication and leadership sustaining long term goals of educational achievement and persistence.

Baseline data is collected on each year's participants to measure impact of the program over the long term. Pre- and post-measurements are given during the initial program and again during the second year or support phase.

The program administrators indicated interest in replicating the program in Yuma and southern Arizona, but felt significant program changes should be made to address the different level of acculturation among Hispanics in these areas.

Support for the program is provided through federal Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education funds.

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Ethnicity and Sex Role Stereotyping

This program is sponsored by Youth Guidance, a counseling and psychotherapy organization addressing the needs of at-risk youth. This organization has offices within the Chicago public schools. The program is supported by a grant from the state education agency.

The program in Bowen High School in South Chicago is designed to specifically address the powerful cultural norms and related sex role stereotyping influencing the effectiveness of vocational education. A group-oriented intervention is used to support the positive and combat the negative norms emanating from the home and community.

In the community the traditional path for Hispanic females was early marriage to young men who worked at the steel mills nearby and early parenting. The mills are now closed and male unemployment is high. Girls must now consider other options to early marriage and parenting.

The target population is the potential at-risk graduate population of 9th and 10th grade females. The project director is an Hispanic at-risk graduate of Bowen whose life experience patterns the one described above with one exception--she later went to college and embarked upon a career. The project uses a cultural and feminist perspective, group therapy, and role modeling of successful adults from the community to encourage students to avail themselves of vocational education training opportunities. Additionally, efforts are made to orient the parents regarding the program, assess the family background and situation, and assuage parental fears regarding any potential negative outcomes from their daughter's participation. Students also visit different places of employment--a key element in providing greater exposure to the city and diverse lifestyles.

This project is very culturally specific and project administrators consider its success dependent upon identifying the right individual to implement it.

Contact: David W. Simpson
Youth Guidance
53 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 950
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 435-3900

Enrichment for Latinas Leading to Advancement (ELLA)

The ELLA ("she" in Spanish) Program is designed to meet the special needs of Hispanic girls at Orr High School in Chicago. Although in a minority (15 percent), they have very high rates of dropping out of school (38 percent in the past) and very low rates of enrolling in college or training (as low as 5 percent).

Through ELLA girls receive tutoring and career counseling (including interest assessments and value ordering). They also meet every month with Hispanic professional women who speak about their careers and how they got where they are today. ELLA participants make field trips to colleges and to businesses. They also form companies of their own and make business investments.

ELLA participants are very enthusiastic about the program. It has helped them to feel more a part of the school community and develop in and out-of-school linkages. Girls' families participate as well, through parents' receptions and through informal contact with project staff.

Results of ELLA are very encouraging. Of seniors participating in the program, more than 40% go on to college or training, and fewer than 5% of all participants drop out of school.

The program is implemented by the Youth Service Project, Inc., a community comprehensive service agency, and is supported with federal vocational education funds.

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The California Approach

The model employed by California's state sex equity vocational education unit gave impetus to the present study. Here the unit has acknowledged the influence of culture in vocational education participation and vocational choices. Materials, technical assistance efforts to local education agencies, and intervention programs address the differences among female populations and attempt to make these efforts more appropriate to the diverse ethnic and racial population in the state. As a result a workbook, Images, (a culturally based spinoff of the more general Choices/Challenges: An Investigation of Alternative Occupational Role Models) has been developed targeting black females as well as a video entitled Black Women on the Move. Similar products have been developed for Hispanic females. They include:

- a tabloid insert for inclusion in the C.I.R.C.L.E. Binder of Information, Resources and Curriculum. The tabloid documents demographics, data, and statistical research, regarding high risk Hispanic youth, females in particular, as well as issues within the Hispanic community;

- a "how-to" manual on developing a conference with resources to encourage Hispanic female participation in non-traditional careers.

Products being developed are:

- a video summarizing the results of a survey of successful Hispanas relating how they grew up, the educational and occupational choices they made, and information about their careers. A companion publication to the video is in the works, as well.

The State Equity unit also interacts with Black, Asian, and Hispanic advisory councils. These councils act as resources to the state office, provide recommendations on motivating the respective target population with regard to sex equity goals, and identify resources to be tapped within the respective ethnic communities. The Hispanic Advisory Council, comprised of leading women in the state and representative of the ethnic and economic diversity of Hispanas, reviews the research and resources available for Hispanas and makes recommendations for implementing Carl D. Perkins program objectives specific to the needs of Hispanic females.

With Carl D. Perkins Act funds, the state implements Project TIDE, an inservice training and information dissemination network serving 15 regions in the state. This year's focus has been on equity and effective schools. Throughout the state, 65 schools are receiving special assistance. Strategies and approaches used reflect the research and best practices effective with the dominant population of the schools. Districts which have participated in this process will be able to compete for funds to conduct conferences across the state for either black youth, or Hispanic females, in cooperation with community-based organizations to increase the participation of underrepresented groups in vocational training.

The conference for Hispanic females will be modeled after a recently held conference, "Adelante, Mujer Hispana," which was funded by an SEA grant to the Fresno Metropolitan Regional Occupational Program and implemented by the League of Mexican American Women. The conference, in its fourth year, is designed especially for the varied needs of today's Hispanic women and teens and addresses a range of topics impacting high school students, professional women, homemakers, mothers, single parents, the unemployed, the under employed, and those who would like to change careers or upgrade their skills.

Each year the SEA is phasing in a new level of programming on targeted populations. At the first level, staff development is provided to district vocational personnel on Hispanic issues. This is the awareness level. Next linkages between districts and community resources are forged. This is done by building CBO involvement into the requests for proposal process wherein districts receive state or federal funds dispursed by the state. Finally, a mentoring network is established at the local level.

According to a local project director, Hispanics have fewer established organizations to mobilize in developing mentoring relationships with at-risk girls in the community compared to other ethnic and racial groups. The conferences are used to identify local mentors and establish mentoring networks among women and other professionals and trades people in the community. The project director cautioned that these networks cannot be established overnight and efforts do not always work the first time around. Rather outreach programs must be repeated to give an opportunity for program directors and school personnel to learn from the process and the community, to develop trust within the community, and to expand the base of available community resources.

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VI. DISCUSSION

The survey identified a number of education programs which reflect a sensitivity to the specific needs of at-risk Hispanic females. These programs illustrate a range of promising practices which can be shared among state and local vocational education and sex equity personnel and administrators of programs serving this population. Although these programs contain many components typical of other programs also addressing the education and employment preparation of at-risk youth, they combine and expand upon these components in ways specifically tailored to the needs of the at-risk Hispanic females they serve.

In contrast, the more generally-focused programs (e.g., programs targeting at-risk males and females) may include singly or in tandem components such as career exploration and the development of pre-employment skills, positive self-concepts, and a positive attitude toward work. Interagency services may also be utilized to address the academic, training, emotional, social services, health, child care and transportation needs required of many at-risk youth. Where students are also limited English proficient, bilingual/ESL vocational education services may be provided.

A low student/staff ratio is often essential to providing the breadth of services these students require as well as stipends and other opportunities to work while learning. Although the focus of the more general programs is often on providing work experience and developing skills necessary for a successful work experience, little emphasis is placed on non-traditional careers for the females in these programs. To some extent, Hispanic community resources/businesses are utilized and there may be limited parental involvement.

In some cases, the more general programs are implemented by community-based organizations (CBOs). When CBOs are involved programming tends to provide more culturally specific role models supplied through staff and other community resources than is evident in programs run by the schools alone.

The programs which specifically target at-risk Hispanic females contain many of the above components and more. Their emphasis is consistently on preparation for non-traditional careers and acknowledgement of the role that culture plays in vocational choices. This approach has led to the design of comprehensive programs that systematically address the many barriers that at-risk Hispanic females face to greater and more diverse participation in vocational education.

The programs are usually designed, implemented, and/or run in collaboration with community-based organizations. Some programs receive strong guidance from advisory groups reflective of broad segments of the Hispanic community. Use of Hispanic role models and businesses, preferably from or with some link to the community, is extensive. The programs tend to also involve parents to a great

extent and recognize the importance of the home influence in decisions about preparation for work outside the home and non-traditional careers. Mentoring is also a key component of many of these programs.

Since the program goal is often to help at-risk females better utilize existing school programs and resources and to help schools better serve these students, a strong school link is usually evident in the community-based programs.

The strength and success of the best programs, whether implemented by schools or community based organizations, lie in the comprehensive manner in which they seek to address the needs of at-risk Hispanic females. Although many of the more general programs illustrate a range of good practices, they often lack this comprehensive focus as well as the elements of cultural specificity and sensitivity displayed in the more targeted programs.

According to one program director, this level of specificity often makes state departments reluctant to fund these programs since SEAs look for easily exportable models. Yet as illustrated in the approach pursued by the California SEA, policies supporting targeted approaches can be developed and models designed for replication which also take into consideration group and within-group differences. The acknowledgement of cultural differences can help to optimize the number of strategies and resources employed in addressing the problems of underrepresentation and underachievement of these students.

It is difficult to assess the impact of many of these program on the achievement and attainment of these students. Programs directors using this approach believe that targeting is a more efficient and effective strategy for reaching these goals than more general or less culturally specific approaches. Improved grades and increased graduation, postsecondary education/training, and employment rates have been cited as documented outcomes of some programs while others can point to improved participation in vocational education generally and a range of vocational courses specifically. Other program directors indicated that it is too soon to determine these outcomes.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In conducting the study it soon become evident that special affirmative actions for Hispanic females are needed if they are to truly realize the expanded opportunities for education and vocational training presently available to them. Females in predominately male vocational training settings and in traditionally male training courses are few. Hispanic females are even fewer. To excell and persist in these male environments they must be strong individuals with high self-esteem and a sense of purpose and goals. They must also have the strong backing of their families.

The focus of vocational training and technical schools and programs on occupational preparation often limit the range of electives and extracurricular activities traditionally associated with high school life. As many vocational institutions are structured, the road to job preparation in a non-traditional career field may mean foregoing a coterie of female friends, having few female teachers, and few opportunities to network with other females through clubs and special activity groups.

In recognition of these barriers to participation, programs have been developed with federal funds to systematically address many of these barriers. Women and girls in these settings are given assertiveness training, and provided mentors, role models, and support services such as transportation and child care. Still, few of the systemic barriers have been broached. Vocational/technical centers are still largely white male bastions; civil rights laws have caused the removal of only the most obvious and offensive trappings.

Bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL) services are not available extensively in vocational settings and limited English proficient students are often directed to schools and areas of the curriculum where these services exist. A better job must be done of educating parents and students to the benefits of vocational education and in developing appropriate interventions to increase participation and successful outcomes for students. The vocational education and sex equity communities must work to address the structural barriers within the vocational education systems and within all aspects of the educational continuum. Goals must be articulated and measured in terms of high school graduation and persistence through postsecondary training, and employment in high wage employment areas. Strategies must be employed which mobilize the communities and families in support of these goals.

Specific recommendations for state education agency policymakers in vocational education and sex equity vocational education programs include:

1. Support local demonstrations which focus on the specific needs of at-risk students and which systematically account for and address barriers related to cultural differences and their effect on the achievement of equity in vocational education.

2. Pay greater attention to the influence of home and family, male and female relations, and level of group acculturation. Program components should be designed to cultivate, maximize/minimize and address these influences. Employing intergenerational efforts involving girls and women and mothers and daughters appears to be successful in counteracting the fears and peer pressures experienced by younger females which affect career preparation. Intergenerational efforts have also mobilized the support and experience of older females in furthering sex equity goals in vocational education.

3. Provide inservice training to regional and local vocational education staff on the development of culturally sensitive strategies to improve access to a range of quality and non-traditional programs in vocational education for at-risk Hispanic females.

4. Implement aggressive recruitment efforts at the middle school level to enroll more Hispanic females in secondary school vocational education. Interventions should be targeted at the middle school levels before vocational stereotyped biases are set so that students may begin the sequence of courses necessary to avail themselves of a range of vocational education options.

5. Provide counseling, academic support, and language services to encourage at-risk Hispanic female participation in courses and work experiences leading to high wage employment areas. Aggressive recruitment efforts should also be made to increase their participation in quality apprentice training and cooperative work experiences. Focus should also be on increasing access to vocational high schools and area vocational-technical centers.

6. Expand bilingual/ESL vocational education services and ensure their association with the non-traditional course areas of the curriculum so that these programmatic options are available to limited English proficient students.

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APPENDIX

A. List of Identified Programs Serving but not Specifically Targeting At-Risk Hispanic Females

B. Description of Selected Programs from the Preceding List

A. PROGRAMS SERVING BUT NOT SPECIFICALLY TARGETING AT-RISK HISPANIC FEMALES

(NOTE: Programs with * are described in the following section.)

1. Programs targeting at-risk females but few Hispanics

   - Model Department of Youth Services Education Collaborative
     Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical
     Pautucket Blvd.
     Tyngsboro, MA 01879
     Contact: Nelson Burns
     (617) 454-4519

   - Sunset High School Single Parent Program
     Clark County School District
     2832 S. Flamingo Drive
     Las Vegas, NV 89121
     Contact: Kathleen Frosini
     (702) 799-5486

2. Programs targeting at-risk males and females

   - The Multicultural Career Intern Programs (MCIP)
     Bell Career Development Center
     3145 Hiatt Place, N.W.
     Washington, D.C. 20010
     Contact: Maria Tukera
     (202) 673-3551

   - Operation Graduation School Dropout
     Prevention Program
     Michigan Department of Education
     P.O. Box 30009
     Lansing, MI 48909
     Contact: Naomi Bryson
     (517) 335-0364

   - The Adolescent Vocational Exploration Program (AVE)
     and Structured Education Support Program (SESP) *
     New York Education Department
     One Commerce Plaza, Room 1624
     Albany, NY 12234
     Contact: Johanna Duncan
     (518) 474-3973

3. Programs targeting minority females

- Summer Pre High Tech Program *
  Salt Lake Community College
  P.O. Box 30808
  Salt Lake City, UT 84111
  Contact: Richard Gomez
  (801) 533-5550

- Women in Transition
  Salt Lake Skill Center
  1080 W. 700 South
  Salt Lake City, UT 84104
  Contact: Cathy Shaffer
  (801) 539-1590

4. Programs targeting pregnant and parenting youth

- Broad Horizon-Young Parents/OIC Fanning
  Fanning Trade
  25 Chatham St.
  Worcester, MA 01608
  Contact: Maureen Shannon
  (617) 770-7353

- Project Self-Sufficient
  Bayonne Public Schools
  Avenue A & 29th St.
  Bayonne, NJ 07002
  Contact: Agnes Gillespie
  (201) 858-5925

- New Futures School *
  2120 Louisiana Blvd., N.E.
  Albuquerque, NM 87110
  Contact: Caroline Gaston
  (505) 883-5680

- Single Parent Homemaker Program *
  Region XIX Education Service Center
  P.O. Box 10716
  El Paso, TX 79997
  Contact: James T. Mancill
  (919) 593-5081

5. Programs targeting limited English proficient students

- Bilingual Vocational Education Program
  Salt Lake Skill Center
  1040 W. 700 South
  Salt Lake City, UT 84104
  Contact: Marian Noble
  (801) 328-5528

- Western Regional Center for Vocational Equity *
  Frederick County Vocational-Technical Center
  7922 O'Possumtown Pike
  Frederick, MD 21701
  Contact: Bonnie McNamee
  (301) 694-1658

- Vocational Support Services Team
  Montgomery Blair Senior High School
  313 Wayne Ave.
  Silver Spring, MD 20970
  Contact: Diane Swift
  (301) 587-2700 Ext. 253

- Bilingual Business
  Jamaica Plain High School
  144 McBride St.
  Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
  Contact: Jean Michaels
  (617) 442-5200 Ext. 586

- Limited English Academic Support *
  Putnam Vocational Technical High School
  1300 State Street
  Springfield, MA 01109
  Contact: Clifford Flint
  (413) 787-7424

- Bilingual Home Support *
  Putnam Vocational Technical High School
  1300 State Street
  Springfield, MA 01109
  Contact: Clifford Flint
  (413) 787-7424

- Guidance for LEP Students
  Dean Vocational Technical High School
  325 Pine St.
  Holyoke, MA 01040
  Contact: Walter Welch
  (413) 534-2071

- Support for LEP Students *
  Dean Vocational Technical High School
  325 Pine Street
  Holyoke, MA 01040
  Contact: Walter Welch
  (617) 534-2071

- **Automotive/LEP**
  Cambridge Ridge and Latin High School
  459 Broadway
  Cambridge, MA 02138
  Contact: Karen Prentice
  (617) 498-9284

- **Bilingual Guidance Aide ***
  Humphrey Occupational Resource Center
  75 New Dudley Street
  Boston, MA 02119
  Contact: Jean Michaels
  (617) 442-5200 Ext. 586

6. Programs targeting adults

- **Alternatives Single Parent/Homemaker**
  1700 Spartan Dr.
  Elgin, IL 60123
  Contact: Cindy Morhlin
  (312) 888-6918

- **Hispanic Women's Program**
  Hispanic Women's Center
  709 E 21st St.
  Wichita, KS 67214
  Contact: Maria Balderas
  (316) 264-5372

B. DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED PROGRAMS FROM THE PRECEDING LIST

In New York, the Departments of Labor and Education fund the Adolescent Vocational Exploration Program (AVE) and the Structured Educational Support Program (SESP). AVE and SESP are designed to provide an Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE) program to economically disadvantaged in-school youth ages 14 to 18 who are at risk of becoming school dropouts, umemployed young adults, or youthful offenders. While Hispanic females are not the primary target population of these programs, a large number of the participants enrolled are Hispanics.

The SESP site at Long Beach, New York primarily enrolls Hispanic youngsters many of which are new immigrants. It is sponsored by a community-based organization, Circulo de la Hispanidad, Inc. Services to participants include counseling, remediation, and career exploration. This is an after-school program in which students must participate a minimum of six and a maximum of nine hours per week. Students receive a stipend of $3.35 per hour during the school year and are assisted in finding work or entering remediation programs at a local technical institute in the summer.

The needs of girls are not differentiated from those of boys. Rather, common problems of adolescence are addressed. Students are introduced to a wide array of careers, provided shadowing

experiences, and advised in developing decision making skills regarding future careers. The girls tend to pursue interests in traditionally female occupations (e.g., flight attandants, nursing, teaching, beauty, culture).

Through extensive interagency efforts, the Regional XIX Education Service Center in El Paso, Texas coordinates the vocational education activities of three small rural schools in providing vocational training to Hispanic single parent females. For the most part, participants are of Mexican origin and 15 years of age and older. Many are limited English proficient, and many are school dropouts. They often have multiple emotional and economic needs. In addition to vocational training, the single parents receive vocational assessment and counseling, basic literacy instruction, child care services, transportation, and some have been assisted with tuition to take vocational education courses at the local community college. These types of services could not have been provided by one of the small schools alone due to limitations of staff and vocational training programs. To date training has focused on traditionally female areas such as teacher aides and clerical occupations, however, a general building trades program is being developed. The program is supported by federal vocational education funds and the local districts (principally through in-kind donations of personnel).

The predominantly Hispanic New Futures School, an alternative school in Albuquerque, New Mexico offers an employment program curriculum designed to help parenting teens become self-sufficient by developing the skills necessary to obtain a job and be successful at it. Important elements of this comprehensive program are:

- a strong vocational advisory committee comprised of community and business leaders which assist in curriculum review, job development and fundraising;
- an individualized career maturity unit stressing pre-employment skills (e.g., job applications and interviews) and utilizing a career interest survey to help identify skills and abilities;
- health and counseling services;
- coordination with the students' academic or GED courses; and
- free extended day care.

The curriculum is designed to develop positive self-concept, the ability to get along with others, a positive attitude toward work, and time and money management skills as well as to provide actual work experiences. According to the program director, these components are essential since many of the students come from homes without stable and positive work experiences as models. The program also seeks to expand the limited stereotyped perspective many of the girls possess regarding what a women is and can do vocationally.

The Summer Pre High Tech Program in Salt Lake City, Utah is designed to provide summer high tech skills training for high school female minority students (the majority are Hispanic). The goal is to encourage students to prepare for and pursue careers in high tech, non-traditional occupations. The program uses the MESA (Math, Engineering and Science Achievement) model to identify and track underrepresented groups into math and science curricula leading to science and technical careers. The program is unique, however, in exposing students to vocational technical programs thus stressing options for entry into high tech careers.

The girls are given high school credit for the summer program and are enrolled in a special MESA course at the high school during the regular school year. The students have made high leaps in their overall grade point averages and improvements in school attendance. Parents are important components of the programs success. They must sign agreements in support of the program activities. The program is funded by Carl D. Perkins sex equity funds.

Among the numerous vocational education programs identified which target limited English proficient students, program components include some of the following:

- Use of specialized instructional materials (e.g., oral and written translations) and Spanish speaking technical assistants to help students gain the skills necessary to succeed in their academic and vocational programs. (Massachusetts and Maryland)

- Supplemental guidance support and material to encourage students to remain in school and succeed in vocational programs. (Massachusetts)

- Bilingual guidance aides to work with bilingual and monolingual counselors to assist with translations and interpretation of assessment results. (Massachusetts)

- Home/school liaison services to students in jeopardy of leaving school prior to completion to assist them to successfully complete their vocational and academic programs. The bilingual (Spanish/English) liaison worker develops rapport with the student's family, facilitates necessary support services within the school in coordination with school staff and utilizes existing community agencies. (Massachusetts)

- Special vocational assessment and outreach to recruit Hispanic ESOL students to enroll in a vocational technical center including shadowing experiences for ESOL students and meetings with parents. (Maryland)